

Jan 12 2006 - Slaughter: Dreier the Wrong Choice for Ethics Reform

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Architect of Ethics Rules Roll Back and DeLay Ally has No Credibility on Reform

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today acknowledged having a conversation with Rep. Dreier regarding ethics reform, which was reported in Congress Daily PM yesterday. She released the following statement:

"One year ago this month, Chairman Dreier, a close DeLay associate, became the principal architect of the Tom Delay Protection Plan, which resulted in the gutting of Ethics rules in Congress and has rendered the Ethics Committee impotent ever since. As a result of those actions, we have absolutely no accountability in Congress today.

As Chair of the Rules Committee, Mr. Drier has also condoned the worst abuses of the legislative process in modern history, which has included the regular abandonment of House rules, the forcing of votes on legislation written by lobbyists, but unseen by the membership of the House, the regular employment of late night meetings to avoid public and media scrutiny and the active prevention of open floor debate and consideration of amendments and bills before the People's house.

The American people have paid a heavy price for these unethical and heavy handed tactics. While I am pleased the republican leadership has finally recognized what I have been saying for over a year- that the Republican culture of corruption threatens to swallow the United States Congress whole, there is no question that Mr. Dreier is clearly the wrong choice to lead any Reform agenda in the United States Congress.

It will be years before the damage caused to the American people by his unprecedented, unethical and heavy handed tactics can be corrected. Ironically, in a 1993 discussion on ethics reform, Rep. Dreier remarked that "The best reform that we could implement would be simply adherence to the standing rules of the House."

While I believe the need for reform is real today, I agree with Mr. Dreier that the best way to quickly restore integrity in this House is for the Republican Leadership to both follow and enforce the existing rules of this body which they have ignored for so long."

No Credibility on Reform

- Dreier introduced the 109th Congress rules package which sought to dismantle the House Ethics Committee and allow the Majority Leader DeLay to retain his leadership post even if under indictment. He voted for the package.

Congressional Record, January 4, 2005, Rules Floor Debate on 109th Congress Rules Package:

Mr. DREIER. ..."I believe that the package that we have coming before us is one which addresses many of the concerns that frankly were raised by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER). ((January 4, 2005 H15)

Mr. DREIER ... "So I believe that this package is one which should enjoy strong bipartisan support, because when it comes to matters of ethics it will address the concern and the protection of Members of both the minority and the majority, as well as this institution as a whole. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time. ((January 4, 2005 H17)

- Included in the December 1993 Final Report of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress on page 37 was the following Dreier reference and quote:

Minority party witnesses were concerned with the frequency with which House Rules are waived. Citing "the chronic failure of the majority leadership to abide by the rules that are there," Representative Dreier remarked. "The best reform that we could implement would be simply adherence to the standing rules of the House."